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Letter dated 22 March 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

As you know, yesterday I announced my decision to conduct an investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

On 20 March 2013, I received a letter from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic requesting a specialized, impartial and independent mission to investigate the incident of 19 March 2013 involving an alleged use of chemical weapons in Kafr Da'il region in Khan al-Asal area in Aleppo governorate, Syrian Arab Republic.

On 21 March 2013, I received a letter from the Governments of France and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland requesting an investigation into the alleged use of chemical weapons in the locations of Khan al-Asal in Aleppo and Ataybah in the vicinity of Damascus, as well as in Homs on 23 December 2012.

Other Member States have also written to me or made public statements calling for the above-mentioned investigation mission to look into all allegations of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In the meantime, I have also been in contact with the Director General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Ahmet Üzümcü, and the Director General of the World Health Organization, Margaret Chan. They have both assured me of their full support.

I have requested the Governments concerned to provide additional information pertaining to the incidents that they have reported to me. The provision of this information will be crucial in defining the terms of reference for the mission and the scope of its work with a view to verifying any alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In communicating my decision to the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, I clearly stated the importance of receiving the fullest cooperation from all relevant authorities in the country in order to assist the mission in achieving prompt and credible findings, in particular by respecting the status, privileges and immunities of the mission and its personnel, granting immediate entry into the Syrian Arab Republic to all members of the investigation mission, providing adequate security and through unfettered access to all relevant locations. My senior advisers will contact the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the modalities required for the investigation mission in order to allow it to start its important work as soon as possible in the coming days.

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As you know, I have emphasized the primary responsibility of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure the safety and security of any chemical weapons and related materials as well as to assure the international community that any stockpiles of chemical weapons in the country are safeguarded. I stand ready to assist the Government in this regard.

I should be grateful if you would bring this letter to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon